

## **West Village Historic District**

General Boundaries: Kercheval, Parker, East Jefferson Avenue, and Seyburn Avenue.

Local	✓	2/2/83
State		
State Marker		
National	✓	10/14/80



1000 block of Parker streetscape.



### **Historic Overview:**

The West Village neighborhood is a benchmark to the growth of Detroit in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and as the home of a number of prominent residents, some of whom achieved national note. West Village received its name in the mid-twentieth century in recognition of its location adjacent to its more famous neighbor, Indian Village. Unlike its neighbor, West Village has always sheltered a variety of social classes ranging from factory workers and artisans to millionaires.

This area was originally part of Hamtramck Township until 1891, when Baldwin Avenue ceased to be the city limits. As subdividing took precedence, an uncommon street and alley arrangement provided opportunity for a unique housing experiment in 1909 called Shipherd Court. A cluster of single family houses faced a courtyard instead of the alley. The appeal of West Village increased as the area was re-platted in the early 1900s and restrictions regarding cost of the structure, its use, setback, and height were commonly imposed. Jefferson Avenue was one of Detroit's most exclusive residential thoroughfares at the turn-of-the-century.

This neighborhood built-up rapidly between 1905-1925 with fine middle class homes, apartment buildings and row houses. During the decades from 1920-50 West Village enjoyed a time of prosperous maturity. It was home to a number of prominent Detroiters such as Franz Kuhn, Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court and president of the Michigan State Telephone Company, and Edwin Denby, Secretary of the Navy. In the post war years as racial tensions accelerated suburban flight, West Village began to decline. In the 1970s the resurgence of fashionable Indian Village generated new interest in West Village. Today the area is enjoying a renaissance in residential popularity.